

SSI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR)

Request for Proposals

PURPOSE

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Bureau of Supportive Housing (BSH), is pleased to announce the availability of funds to support access to SSI/SSDI for people who have serious mental illness and are homeless. The primary purpose of the funding is to develop a local partnership of agencies that will provide the infrastructure to ensure outreach, engagement, and successful application for benefits for the target population.

- 1.) Develop support among local agencies in the community for the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) model of assisting people with mental illness to apply for benefits.
- 2.) Develop a plan to coordinate services for people who have serious mental illness and are homeless in partnership with agencies that have demonstrated experience in working with this population.

Many homeless adults, particularly those who have mental illness and are chronically homeless, do not receive Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits. While many are likely to be eligible, only 11% of the people who are homeless are currently estimated to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. Nationally, only 37% of SSA disability applicants are approved for benefits upon initial application. Although approvals increase to 53% after appeal, that process can take years. Using SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery (SOAR) methods, initial approval rates can increase to 60 to 90% of applicants, without appeals. Information about the SOAR model can be found on the Policy Research Associates (PRA) website at <http://www.prainc.com/soar/>

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All cities, counties, tribal agencies, and private nonprofit agencies in Wisconsin are eligible to apply for these funds. Private nonprofit agencies must be exempt from taxation under subtitle A of Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code; governed by a voluntary board of directors; use approved accounting systems; and practice nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance.

To the extent possible, applicants are encouraged to collaborate with other organizations in developing and implementing proposals that combine funds with other housing assistance, counseling and supportive service programs. Organizations with demonstrated experience or ability in outreach to people who have serious mental illness and are homeless are encouraged to apply.

Questions concerning eligibility requirements are to be directed to Judith Wilcox at (608) 266-9388 or judy.wilcox@wisconsin.gov.